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THE PICTURES AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION.

FIGURES AND LANDSCAPES.

BY "figures and landscapes" is meant those pictures in which there is no special prominence given either to the figures or to the landscapes in which they are placed; both being painted in the same manner and equally made out. The right that pictures of this kind have to be considered as a class by themselves, is very seldom acknowledged in critiques; perhaps because the difficulties to be overcome in producing them are not quite as much appreciated as they should be; but, one fact alone is enough to show how great those difficulties are. In works of this kind every part must be judged by the same standard of realism, whereas in what is understood as a figure picture, the figures may with perfect propriety be painted in a studio light and be made as realistic as possible, and the landscape treated simply as a background will of necessity be entirely conventional. Mr. G. Mason's works are the most perfect of the class now under notice, and it is unfortunate that he is not represented in this Exhibition, but his picture last year, The Evening Hymn, must be so well remembered that it may even now be mentioned as an example of the equal development of landscape and figures, in a picture in which the unity of the whole is the first and chief motive.

The most complete picture of the kind this year is Mr. Barclay's An Unsuccessful Angler (64). In it the figures and background are perfectly homogeneous; no one part is out of harmony with the rest, and the quaint grace of the figures and simple tone of colour is most charming. Being painted without any medium, it certainly suffers by comparison with its varnished neighbours, but one thing may be said—pictures painted in this dry manner will not change: as they are now, so they will remain; which is by no means always the case with those painted with all kinds of oils and megilps. With their usual and remarkable absence of taste, the managers of the Exhibition have hung this (one of the best of their small-sized pictures) in a most uncomfortable corner, where a piece of the maroon cloth with which the walls are draped comes in immediate contact with one side of the frame, and as nearly as possible destroys the great merit of colour Mr. Barclay's work possesses.

Against Cromwell; Royalist Children Playing at Soldiers (89), to which is given the place of honour, illustrates very well how a picture of this kind may be an entire failure for want of that homogeneousness just referred to. Mr. Archer, R.S.A., has painted this picture under the effect of a gray, cloudy sky, in which case the light would be so suffused that scarcely any perceptible shadow could exist except in the deep folds of drapery, while in the faces there would be an almost entire absence of light and shade. But instead of an evenness of tone only relieved by very delicate gradations of colour, the features are made out by strong shadows, which could not happen except in sunlight. That the intention was to realize an out-of-door effect seems certain, for the lights in the flesh are of a cold whiteness that is only seen in the open air, but even that is overdone. A more serious fault is that the figures, right or wrong in themselves, are entirely out of harmony with the landscape. However, it must not be supposed that there are no merits in the work, for the background is very good, both as to truth of colour, style, and painting, and but for the figures, would be a most complete and satisfactory landscape.

Morning (255), by Mr. J. J. Hill, is a sample of what may be called the school of sentimental rusticity. It is cleverly painted no doubt—too cleverly in fact—but a subject like this should be treated either with style or with the most bitter realism, whereas Mr. Hill has not attempted any nobleness either in the figures or general composition, and has sacrificed all the more unpleasant realities for an insipid prettiness which is worthless. Another kind of rustic picture not even sentimental is Mr. Cobbett's Welsh Spring (244). It is made up of two figures draped in the most conventional rustic costume, and placed without any motive whatever by one of the most conventional Welsh springs, and on the ground are the inevitable brown jar and tin can. In these kind of pictures no effort seems ever to be made after any serious quality even of painting, and this one is only noticed that it may be said that we have had enough and more than enough of Welsh springs, brown jars and impossible peasants.

It is a relief to pass to a picture like The Wood-gatherers (320A), by Mr. J. C. Thom, which is admirable in tone and, with the one exception of the sky, which seems a little glaring for the rest of the landscape, the colour is extremely good, and the composition well managed. Mr. Thom's other pictures (65 and 285) are not so complete, perhaps, but they are all wonderfully clever, and show the influence of Edouard Frère. A picture which is very nearly being extremely good is The Highland Shepherd Boy (338), by Mr. E. N. Downward. The union of landscape and figures is capitally managed, and where the head comes against the sky, the truth of relative colour and tone is especially to be praised. A certain raggedness in the painting of the grass and foreground is unfortunate, as it damages the general effect of what would otherwise be a very successful picture.

Mr. L. C. Livett, for whose work we have been accustomed to look in the Water Colour Room, is this year only represented by oil paintings. The most important and best of his pictures is Summer Evening (267), which represents two girls fishing by a river side, under an evening effect. The colour here is in an original key, and very charming, and the arrangement of light and dark is also very good. In fact, there is the agreeable disposition of form and colour within a given space, which is of the first importance in pictorial art. When we come to details of form, however, we find Mr. Livett has much to learn, and his faces are open to the objection of being rather affected in Expression. His Girl and Swan (161) has not this fault, but has not quite so much merit, for it is in a much lower key, where it is easier to be sure of harmony. The Shrimpers (347), a sort of processional picture, has the merit of originality in its conception, and power in its execution. The semi-twilight of an evening by the sea, when the toilers thereof go forth to their piscatorial labour, is exceedingly well rendered, and is—like the study of Bathing Machines (132)—admirable in tone.

In the Water Colour Room is a remarkable and original drawing by Mr. W. Crane (557)—

> Such sights as youthful poets dream
> On summer eves by haunted stream—

In a work like this, beauty of form, correctness of tone, and a well-balanced arrangement of colour are the principal things to be striven after. The latter quality has been most successfully achieved, for, while the pattern of colour is very skilful, the contrasts and more delicate parts are managed with great refinement, and the whole effect is one of great force and power. The form is in most part pleasant also, in the drawing of the trees, and the composition of the procession of figures (the "dream") that pass on the opposite bank of the river, but the figure of the Poet seems too large for the picture, and the attitude—anything but beautiful—is in no way helped by the ungraceful disposition of the drapery. Still the whole picture is a daring and successful attempt at originality without any unpleasant affectation, and such originality is now very rare.

A small and unpretentious drawing by Mr. R. B. Wallace, A Garden Scene (527), is most charming. It consists of a single figure of a lady walking in a garden, reading a book. The figure is well drawn and refined in conception, and the colour is quiet and harmonious. There is nothing in a picture more difficult to keep in harmony than flowers, for they are so brilliant and positive in colour that there is generally a strong temptation, in painting them, to force their colour as far as possible, which, if given way to in the least, is apt to do most serious injury to the effect of the whole picture. Mr. Wallace deserves great praise for the manner in which he has kept his background in its place.

Mr. Knight is one of the few, in this exhibition, who has succeeded in introducing figures into landscapes in such a manner that the whole looks to have been painted at once. The only picture of the kind by

Mr. Knight this year is Breton Peasants (390). It is powerful and effective, and quite equal to the other works he exhibits, which have already been noticed.

Two drawings by Mr. J. Absolon, called respectively A Question of Time (437) and The Wife of Camille Desmoulin (418), must be classed among figures and landscapes, if anywhere. As in the case of Mr. Gale's picture (324) it may be asked very properly why the Hanging Committee placed such productions on the line. In point of drawing and design they are about equal to the kind of illustrations prevalent a good many years ago in Annuals (which is saying very little for those illustrations), and the colour is as bad as the design. Mr. Absolon has done work ere this of a dashing sketchy nature which was comparatively harmless, but of the two drawings mentioned above there is absolutely nothing good to be said.

In summing up the Exhibition as a whole, the first impression, viz., that it is an average one and no more, is confirmed. The pictures of which good can be said are, with few exceptions, but of mediocre merit; and there is a painfully large number of works which it is impossible to praise, and some without the remotest promise of better things. It is not much comfort in speaking so strongly to be able to say that the two perhaps most unpardonable pictures are by Royal Academicians. Of course, it has been impossible to mention anything like all the pictures that deserved praise, and the most that could be done was to classify as distinctly as possible the different styles represented, and by selecting the best and worst of these styles for especial remark, and explaining how and why they are the best and worst, to give some kind of idea of what the Exhibition is composed.

[MANCHESTER BANKS.]

NATIONAL PROVINCIAL BANK OF ENGLAND.

LIKE Spanish princes, this bank has an imposing and lengthy title. We have included it in our gallery of Manchester Banks, although in the strictest sense of the term it can scarcely be so called, and to describe it merely as a Manchester bank would convey but a faint idea of its nature and composition. National it is, and Provincial it is, but it is metropolitan or Manchester in only a very limited sense of the term. With whom originated the idea of establishing the bank we are not prepared to say, but the probability is that, like its sister or grandmother "the old lady of Threadneedle Street," a Scotchman had something to do with its projection. The bank seems to be modelled and conducted largely on the Scotch system. It was established in 1833, and at the present time has 130 branches, extending all over England and Wales, from Northumberland to Cornwall. Strictly speaking, these agencies can scarcely be called branches, inasmuch as they do not emanate directly from the main trunk in London, but rather the metropolitan office exists for the accommodation of the country banks, and it is only of late years that they began to draw upon the London establishment, having previously divided their business among more than one of the private and joint-stock London banks.

The National Provincial Bank has a paid-up capital of £1,080,000, with a reserve fund of £250,386, and its last dividend with bonus was at the rate of 24 per cent. per annum. It issues its own notes, the circulation under Peel's act being limited to £442,000. Establishing offices in many parts of the country where banks did not before exist, it has proved of great convenience and advantage in developing the resources of places which from small beginnings have become centres of industry. Especially useful also has it been in affording commercial travellers, and others, opportunities of remitting money to their headquarters in Manchester, Newcastle, and other large towns, and customers who keep accounts with the bank in London have moneys paid to their credit at its various branches, and remitted free of charge.

We have said that the National Provincial Bank can scarcely be defined as a Manchester Bank. It has no local board of directors, like the Manchester and Salford, the Union, or the great Panchester and Puddlepool, with its two offices and seven paid managers. Of late years, however, the National Provincial has assumed more prominence in the town, and now we believe does a thriving business. When we first made its acquaintance it had a small office in Mosley Street, adjoining the Union Club. Behind the office was a small back parlour and a kitchen, and the manager lived above stairs. The staff consisted of the manager, a cashier, and a boy, and it was altogether a primitive sort of of place. There be banks and banks. There are the great palatial buildings in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, and Liverpool, which we enter with absolute awe; where, having received the proceeds of our cheque, we rejoice with trembling, and retire impressed with the idea of our utter insignificance. Formerly the Manchester banks were dingy, smoke-begrimed old places, of which few specimens are now to be found. There were Scholes's in Cannon Street, Daintry's in Norfolk Street, Heywood's, a dark old place where the modern handsome building stands, and Jones Loyd's, the quaintest of them all, where a tall man could reach across the counter and thrust his hands among the sovereigns, if so minded, and where great spluttering yellow tallow candles threw a faint light upon the scene. There, also, did old-fashioned fogies of clerks and tellers toast their shins before a big fire, while you waited, with what patience you could muster, until they should condescend to approach and inquire, "How will you take it?" We wonder if the county bank still exists into which it was once our fortune to enter, where the safe consisted of a box, which was kept under the manager's bed, in a small room off the office. The resources of that establishment were not great, for the manager declared his inability to give change for a five pound note. Such things and places have now passed away, and the National Provincial Bank has built a substantial and commodious building on the opposite side of Mosley Street, upon the site of a dwelling-house formerly occupied by a worthy disciple of Æsculapius.

When the National Provincial Bank first began business it had a very limited connection in Manchester, but it threw open its doors, or we should rather say its door, and resolved patiently to take the goods the gods should provide it with. There are always some commercial waifs and strays in the way of banking business, which are to be picked up by banks of a very unpretending nature. We verily believe that if the *Sphinx* was to take an office and have Bank painted over the door, some lost sheep would find their way to us, wanting a little bill done, some acceptances advised, and sundry aids and assistances to the game of kite-flying. Why, did not Jonah Andrew himself, of Market Street and unsavoury memory, contrive, even with *his* peculiar notions of banking, to obtain deposits and do some business in advising acceptances due in London? Like many bankers, Jonah was addicted to a broad-brimmed hat. Likewise did he rejoice in flowing ambrosial whiskers—"and thereby hangs a tale." About the last transaction which Jonah undertook to perform, was to advise a bill due the following day, and accepted by a sporting tailor of this city. Jonah received the cash, which he omitted to remit. The bill was, of course, dishonoured, and Jonah failed the next morning. Stung with rage, the irate knight of the shears repaired to the broken establishment, seized hold of Jonah, plucked out a handful of his whiskers, and bundled him out of his office with as little ceremony as his namesake the prophet was ejected from his temporary lodgings in the whale's belly.

The first manager of the National Provincial Bank in Manchester was, we believe, a gentleman of a banking family in Birmingham. To him succeeded a Scotchman, a worthy man long since dead, whom we shall designate Mr. Macgillicuddy, and of whom we shall have more to say anon. We don't exactly know how it is, but Scotchmen, Jews, Quakers, and tea dealers, seem to take instinctively to banking, as ducks do to water. The Joneses were originally tea dealers, as were also Twinings and others. Then, as for Quakers, their numbers are legion, Peases, Gurneys, Stuckeys, Lloyds, and others, not forgetting Bernard Barton, a writer of agreeable verses, and the immortal Paul Moon, author of the Royal Rose, and other loyal effusions.

Macgillicuddy, agent of the National Provincial, was a worthy and singular man in his way. When the railway mania of 1845–6 was at its height, by which the fortunes of half the German Jews in Manchester were made, and a large number of those belonging to the Gentiles were marred, an occurrence took place which frightened the commercial world from its propriety, and affected the fortunes of Macgillicuddy. A ponderous blue-book was published which made some startling revelations. You suddenly found that people whom you little suspected of such a thing were holders of railway scrip, amounting in many individual cases to hundreds of thousands of pounds. The knowing ones realized,

and in sporting phraseology, "got out." Not so Macgillicuddy, who held a very large amount of shares. He was remonstrated with by his superior officers or directors, but as he believed in his shares and thought himself a rich man, he threw up his post. Confidence had not yet abated and the demon of speculation was not yet layed. Macgillicuddy's situation resembled that of his countryman in the ballad—

Tam stood like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched:
Ev'n Satan glowr'd and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main,
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a'thegither
And roars out, Weel done, Cutty Sark—
And in an instant a' was dark—

Presently the crash came, the gambling revels, mad and crazy as the witches' dance, were ended. "In an instant a' was dark." Calls came pouring in. A panic was precipitated. Down went railway shares, and down went Macgillicuddy with them.

At one time, and occasionally still, bankers affected certain peculiarities of costume, and notably broad-brimmed hats. Old Clement Royds, the Rochdale banker, wore a hat of prodigious dimensions in that respect, with drab breeches and gaiters. In fact his make-up was like that of a country squire, which he was, and his sons adhere to the costume, in a modified form, to this day. A favourite dress with bankers was, and still is, the "customary suit of solemn black," and white choker, either limp or starched. J. W. Gilbart, manager of the London and Westminster, was addicted to a broad brim, and such enormously high shirt collars that his ears looked as if they were being sawn off. Macgillicuddy, of the National Provincial, likewise had his peculiarities in this way, and, in harmony with his office, was decidedly primitive. On a cold day he might be seen occasionally in the forenoon invigorating his system with a basin of mutton broth upon the counter of the bank. Hailing from the land of Burns, he was Scotch all over. His features were Scotch. His legs were Scotch. His dress was Scotch. His broth was Scotch. His speech was Scotch, and his snuff was Scotch. He wore old-fashioned swallow-tail coats, hobnailed shoes, and his continuations (Macgillicuddy's breeks) were composed of the large check shepherd's plaid pattern, which used to encase the nether limbs of Henry, Lord Brougham and Vaux. Indeed, his national characteristics were so strong, that he is associated in our mind quite as much with "*braes*" as with "banks," and, being of a cheery nature, we should not have been surprised at his, any moment, bursting forth in song, laudatory of "Bonnie Doon" and the "winding Nith."

In London, the head office of the bank has two joint managers, and besides the Bishopsgate Street establishment it has also branches in Waterloo Place, Baker Street, and Islington. Its board of directors is ornamental, and contains the names of one or two noblemen, a baronet, and a number of country gentlemen, with a mixture of the commercial element.

ON THE TRAMWAY.

SCENE: A Suburb. Time: A.D. 1871. 9 a.m.

FIRST PASSENGER *(seated in car, to opposite neighbour)*. Good morning, sir. I hope I see you well.

SECOND PASSENGER *(whose chop was burnt, at breakfast)*. So do I.

1ST P. *(politely)*. Mrs. Opposite quite well?

2ND P. No. Very ill.

1ST P. *(sympathetically)*. Indeed! How's that?

2ND P. Because I'm very well.

1ST P. *(thinking he'd better change the subject)*. Great improvement on the omnibus, these tramway cars, aren't they?

2ND P. They need be.

1ST P. These flange tramways are a great improvement on the guide-wheel tramways, such as that in Pendleton.

2ND P. Glad to hear it. Think there might very easily be a great improvement upon both.

1ST P. Isn't it time we started, though?

2ND P. No. Past it long ago. Guard, why haven't we started?

GUARD. We *have* started, sir.

1ST P. Ah. You see, the motion is imperceptible. Isn't it? *Do* you see?

2ND P. How *can* I see what's imperceptible?

1ST P. *(who won't be offended this time)*. Capital things these tramways! In town directly you've started.

2ND P. Then, why aren't we in town now?

1ST P. Well, I speak metaphorically.

2ND P. Do you? I speak English.

1ST P. *(who thinks he'll humour him)*. Curious oscillation at this point.

2ND P. Guard! Guard! *(prods guard with umbrella. Guard falls off. Car goes half a mile before it can be stopped. Delay of ten minutes. Guard runs up, breathless. Car goes on)*. What was all that jolting just now over?

GUARD. Old woman, sir. Didn't hear car coming. Run over.

1ST P. Dear me, dear me! How very sad. Was she hurt much?

GUARD. Only killed, sir.

1ST P. Goodness gracious!

GUARD. Kill an average of three a journey, sir.

1ST P. Horrible! horrible!

2ND P. *(soothed by slaughter of old woman)*. Very glad to hear it.

GUARD. Much the best to kill 'em outright, sir. Then there's no bother. If you only hurt 'em, they want a lot of compensation. Much the best to kill 'em, sir.

2ND P. Guard! Guard! where are we going? What are you turning down here for?

GUARD. Siding, sir. Down car due in five minutes, sir.

2ND P. You don't mean to say we've got to wait here till it passes, eh?

GUARD. Won't be more than ten minutes at the outside, sir.

1ST P. But why can't you turn off when it comes?

GUARD. Wheels have flanges on 'em, sir. Can't turn off the line. Must go into sidings, sir,

1ST P. Ah, now, there you see—just what I was saying. These flange tramways are most inconvenient. If it had been a guide-wheel tramway —*(suddenly remembers he's been advocating flanges)*—hem! hem! hem! Dear me, what a cough I have!

2ND P. *(whose indignation has been gathering)*. Do you mean to tell me, guard, that I'm being shunted?

GUARD. You *are* shunted, sir. *(2nd Passenger sucks nob of his umbrella furiously. Five minutes' pause. Driver gets down, and begins tickling horses. Horses kick.)*

1ST P. *(much alarmed)*. Guard, what's the matter with the horses? Why are they kicking in that furious manner?

GUARD. Oh, it's only their play, sir.

1ST P. Well, I wish you'd get horses that didn't play.

GUARD. We're going to, sir. We shall have steam engines before long.

2ND P. How much longer will that down car be?

GUARD. Here it comes, sir. I'll ask what makes them behind time. *(Jumps off. Car proceeds joltingly. Varnish off umbrella begins to disagree with 2nd Passenger.)*

2ND P. This jolting motion has a very unpleasant effect upon—upon —in point of fact, one's stomach.

1ST P. *(eager to show his knowledge)*. Ah, that was the points. We were going over the points on to the main line.

2ND P. *(beginning to disagree with 1st Passenger)*. Nothing of the sort, sir. We were going over altogether *(Guard jumps on again)*. Well, guard, what made the down car late?

GUARD. Run over a county magistrate, sir.

1ST P. God bless my soul!

2ND P. *(interested)*. Who?

GUARD. Mr. J. W. something.

2ND P. *(much interested)*. Maclure?

GUARD. Ay, sir, that's it. Mr. J. W. Maclure.

2ND P. *(getting excited)*. Was he much hurt?

GUARD. Oh, yes; he was taken down above a bit, sir.

2ND P. *(impetuously)*. Here's a shilling for you.

1ST P. Look, guard, there's a woman running after the car. Stop it. Quick. *(Much pulling of bells, shrieking of whistles, and putting on of*

brakes. Car stopped, with great difficulty, in about a quarter of a mile. Woman dimly visible in perspective.)

2ND P. Come, come, guard, we've been half an hour already, and we haven't reached All Saints'.

GUARD. Ay, you may tell that by the easy way we've made. You'll find a difference when we get past All Saints'. *(Woman well in sight, strolling placidly.)*

2ND P. Just look at that abandoned female. We can't wait for her. It's out of all reason. *(Guard yells out at woman. Much jigging about of petticoats. Woman evidently trying to run.)*

1ST P. We certainly haven't made the journey quite so rapidly as one would have expected, considering it's a flange tramway.

2ND P. I thought you were praising up guide-wheel tramways just now. *(1st Passenger's cough returns. Woman within speaking distance. She stops, and looks back.)*

GUARD. Come now, missis, get in.

WOMAN. Wait a bit for Jimmy. *(Little boy, struggling with big bundle, faintly visible.)*

2ND P. This is too revolting.

1ST P. Well, it is rather annoying. *(Five minutes' waiting. Little boy trots up with bundle.)*

2ND P. Now, guard, off you go. *(Bell rings. Car starts.)*

WOMAN *(shrieking)*. Stop! stop! There's Tommy yet.

2ND P. Tommy be hanged!

1ST P. *(judicially)*. He must be left behind. *(Woman insists on waiting for Tommy. Car going down hill with great rapidity. Pulled up with tremendous squeaking of brakes and slipping of horses.)*

GUARD. Now, where *is* that Tommy o' yours?

WOMAN *(pointing to distant speck)*. There! Don't you see him? *(Still less boy, with still bigger bundle, just perceptible.)* Come along, Tommy! *(Long pause. Minute boy at last got in. Car proceeds at a fearful rate.)*

WOMAN *(cheerfully)*. Is this the 'bus for Cheadle?

CHORUS OF PASSENGERS. No!

WOMAN. Stop, then, stop! Jimmy and Tommy and I's going to sister Sarah's for the day, and we aint a going to be taken nowhere else for nobody.

GUARD. Why didn't you say so?

WOMAN. Why didn't I say so? Am I to tell you all my family hist'ry? Am I to tell you as I'm a washerwoman, and goes out a chairing sometimes, and ——

CHORUS OF PASSENGERS. Oh, let her out, guard, let her out!

WOMAN. You'd just better. *(Car stopped at last. Woman, and Tommy and Jimmy, exeunt to Aunt Sarah's. Car passes All Saints'. Much whistling and shouting, not to say swearing. Accidents innumerable. Perpetual shunting on to sidings. Points get wrong. Car goes where it shouldn't. Horses taken out, and put to behind. Car dragged back. Horses re-attached. Car behaves in a most extraordinary manner, doing what it oughtn't, just as if it were a human being. 1st Passenger blesses his own soul, and 2nd Passenger curses other people's.)*

1ST P. *(after a long stick and then a jerk)*. Now we're off.

2ND P. The line.

SCENE: Town. Time: 6 p.m.

(Car arrives in town. 1st Passenger has had a fearful row with 2nd Passenger. A life-long friendship severed by a day's compulsory companionship).

GUARD. This is the end of the journey, gentlemen.

2ND P. *(with the calmness of despair)*. Is it? Well, I don't move. I'm going back again. There's no doing any business now. Everybody's putting up his shutters. I shall stop where I am.

1ST P. *(to guard)*. So shall I. *(Exeunt other passengers, enchanted with the new tramway system. Car proceeds.)*

2ND P. Now, guard, where are you going?

1ST P. Why don't you turn round?

GUARD. Flange tramway, sir. Must keep on the line. We go on till we come to an open space, and then the line turns round, and we come back again.

1ST P. How very interesting these flange tramways are!

2ND P. Guard, look here. Where are you going round by?

GUARD. Bolton, sir. *(2nd Passenger seizes hold of his umbrella, and exits, threatening to do for somebody; leaving 1st Passenger to meditate upon the excellences of flange tramways and the necessity of progressing with the times.)*

MORAL.

And now—as portly middle-aged orators remark, after being very lugubrious indeed—to be serious. Tramways must come; and when our streets are widened to admit of them, they will be a great improvement upon omnibuses. It is futile, as well as silly, to set one's face against them. But they are only to be tolerated on suburban routes, at present. To introduce them into the city is the idea of a maniac. And in the city or the suburbs, flange tramways, with sidings, points, and curves, are just preposterous. The tramway cars must be able to go on ordinary roads as well as on the tramways, or what will be a great inconvenience in any case will be an intolerable one. The only feasible plan yet propounded is that now being worked in Salford, and that is a nuisance to the neighbourhood. A better system is sure to be invented before long. Meanwhile, if parliament permits flange tramways, parliament is an ass.

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

DR. TEMPLE AT THE ALLIANCE MEETING.

IT was interesting to watch the audience, at the Alliance annual meeting in the Free Trade Hall, during the delivery of the Rev. Dr. Temple's speech. An Alliance audience, we should imagine, is not accustomed to listen to an intellectual argument. It likes assertion and denunciation; it bubbles over with indignation or enthusiasm; it can cheer as no other audience we ever saw can cheer, and it is always on the outlook for an opportunity to cheer. If it doesn't get it, it is disappointed, and singularly cold. We don't say the meeting of Tuesday last was disappointed with the Bishop of Exeter (that is to be), but the reception of his speech was certainly cold, probably because it was conceived in a style to which Alliance people are unaccustomed. Nevertheless, out-of-doors, Dr. Temple's speech is likely to do the Alliance more good than nine-tenths of the oratory usually heard from Alliance platforms. He pictured the evils of drunkenness with moderation, yet with singular power. He showed convincingly that drunkenness is encouraged, nay almost created as it were, by our present system. I am not a member of the Alliance, he said in effect; I don't know that I can go as far as it goes, namely, for absolute prohibition; but it is the only organization that is practically doing anything to diminish the fearful mischief wrought by the existing drinking system, and I have no choice but to give it what aid I can. This, it will be perceived, is partnership with limited liability. The crucial principle of the Alliance, total prohibition, is evaded, and the reverend gentleman is, in reality, only in favour of further legislative measures of restriction. Dr. Temple is not what can be called a popular speaker. On this occasion, too, he pitched his voice very high, thinking, doubtless, that he could not otherwise reach the outermost bounds of the vast assemblage. The consequence was a somewhat unpleasant strain throughout. Intellectually, however, the speech gave keen pleasure. It had that kind of mastery wherewithal Richard Cobden "wielded at will the fierce democracy:" it appealed to the reason, and it was strong with the strength of moderation. Much of its effect is lost in print; type cannot give the speaker's honest, manly, and persuasive tones.

MUSIC IN MANCHESTER.

Have we not, just now, a trifle too much music in Manchester? We are left absolutely destitute for half a year; a glut follows, we are embarrassed with choice, and we feel inclined to turn away in dismay. Turn away we do, in some measure. But that, we fancy, is rather because the prices of admission are absurdly high, than for lack of appetite. Mdlle. Nilsson, even, though able to "draw" a great house on the night of her first appearance in Manchester, was not a sufficient attraction on the second to counteract the natural objection to a preposterous charge for admission. A better proof of the accuracy of our contention is to be found at the Theatre Royal, where the best Italian

opera company, playing the most varied selection of operas we have had for years, has performed on several occasions to houses almost as poor as those which greeted Mr. Fechter. The gallery (admission one shilling) has been packed by a most respectable auditory, whilst circles and stalls, and frequently the pit, have presented a melancholy array of empty benches. As a contrast, again, take the first of the so-called Saturday Evening Entertainments. To hear Mr. and Mrs. Howard Paul, at rational prices, an immense assemblage gathered in the Free Trade Hall on Saturday last, and hundreds were turned away. The Vocal Society began their third year's campaign on Tuesday, in their new and more comfortable quarters, the Concert Hall. If the capital singing of glees and madrigals could constitute a satisfactory evening's entertainment, they deserve success: but we doubt it. The audience on Tuesday was cold, and certainly the Society's programme that night was deficient in the elements of popularity, and wanted life, and heart, and individuality.

MR. SIMS REEVES'S LATEST CHARACTER.

We learn from a Yorkshire paper that Mr. Sims Reeves made, literally, "quite a hit" in the *Beggar's Opera*, recently performed at Leeds. It seems that the wrath of our great English tenor was excited by the bad singing of one of the stock (query, stick) company. This malefactor was either too big to be safely encountered, or was too wise to leave himself to Mr. Reeves's tender mercies, which were showered on the unfortunate chorus, the irate performer striking one and sending him "spinning" against a table, and giving another, bearing the unmusical name of Stobbs, "a lift with his foot" as he was going off the stage. The audience, in astonishment at such a novel rendering of the part, were told by way of excuse we suppose for his behaviour, that "of all the unseemly ruffians I ever met with, these are the worst." The ill-treated band afterwards assembled, and with that unanimity which generally distinguishes them on the stage, forwarded to Mr. Reeves a demand for an apology, to which, in this instance, he has deemed it advisable to submit. Probably it is Mr. Reeves's intention to introduce into Opera that "realism" which seems to have invaded almost every other portion of the stage, and, by actual rather than metaphoric blows and knocks, to induce the performer to play with feeling, if not with taste and judgment. If so, a new version of the *Beggar's Opera* may be required, and one of his famous songs may in future read:

> When the heart of a man is oppressed with care,
> It soon is relieved by a box on the ears;
> And a kick or two given them neatly, neatly,
> Draws for a chorus applause and cheers.

If this should turn out to be the case, every one on the stage will want a complete suit of armour, or a panoply of defence from the cricket ground at least. No doubt Captain Macheath, as played by Mr. Sims Reeves, is a very striking character, but it is a new reading, and one that will not gain the champion tenor any additional laurels. The worst of it is, this physical force may not be confined to the stage. For, while the tenor is kicking the chorus, the oboe or bass-fiddle may be giving the trombone "blow for blow," and the refined occupants of the stalls will feel about as safe as if they were in the front row at a bull-fight; while the whole would be viewed by the gods "with inextinguishable laughter."

"THE GREAT HONOUR OF KNIGHTHOOD."

The Prince of Wales is authorized to state that the Queen is about to confer "the great honour of knighthood" on the Mayor of Chester. Is it not astonishing how much absurdity is tolerated in this somnolent old world? Cause: a princely visit. Effect: knighthood of the mayor. Whoever he may be, whatever he may have done, or mayn't have done, whatever may be his personal character—are quite subordinate considerations. Mr. Gladstone, who lives in the neighbourhood of Chester, may know a good deal about the mayor, but all that the public knows about him is, that he subscribed a foolishly large amount of money to the fund got up for the reception of the Prince of Wales. It is time to put a stop to this ridiculous practice of knighting whoever accidentally, and for a few hours, comes into a certain official relation to a prince. The most absurd thing of all, however, is that in the face of facts like these, there should still exist infatuated persons who hug the idea that merit has something to do with what they call "getting on."

[LIVING MEN OF LETTERS.]

MR. ALFRED TENNYSON.

ALFRED TENNYSON; the luckiest man of letters in this very lucky age, this day of small things, this money-seeking, veneer-loving time. "Sir," said a gentleman in the stalls at the Olympic, "I can't understand *Little Em'ly* at all." "You seldom can comprehend a dramatized novel," said we. "Have you not read *David Copperfield?*" "Why, no; we young fellows"—he was about ten years younger than his collocutor—"have not time for *deep reading;* we are engaged in *picking up the sixpences!*" An age that calls Dickens *deep* reading, and picks up the sixpences, will appreciate Alfred Tennyson. Look at his portrait. Deep-browed, but not deep-lined; bald, but not grey; with selfish disappointment but little true feeling on his face; slovenly, unkempt, heaped up in the carriage of his shoulders, and with his figure covered with a tragic cloak, the Laureate sits, gloomily peering from two ineffective and not very lustrous eyes, a man of sixty, looking like a more worn and more feeling man of fifty. His skin is sallow, his whole physique not jovial nor red like Shakespere and Dickens, but lachrymose and saturnine; and yet, what a successful man he has been! At the age at which Shakespere was holding horses, he was a pensionary of the court. When he was very young the critics killed a far greater poet, John Keats, so that they might shower down repentant and recalcitrant praise on the successor. When he was but young, an old worn-out poet—a true prose man, but a poet still—put up for the Laureateship after years of toil and pen labour, but the young singer was crowned, and received the Laureate's wreath, the Laureate's fame and pension—the fame made purer and higher from that of his predecessor, Wordsworth.

Tennyson's access to fame was sudden. "Lorsque Tennyson publia ses premiers poëmes," says M. Taine, "the critics spoke mockingly of them," and let us say the critics were right. "He was silent," continues the French author, "and for ten years no one saw his name in a review, nor even in a catalogue, his books had burrowed their way alone (*'avaient fait leur chemin tout seuls et sous terre'*), and on the first blow Tennyson passed for the greatest poet of his country and his age." It was because the age had been sinking in verve and true poetic feeling that Tennyson, great as he is in some points, at once rose to the level of its highest appreciation. He had one or two things about him, not of him but exterior to him, which pleased the public. He was a swell, the son of a Lincolnshire clergyman of good family and of a melodious and high-sounding name. His uncle, Charles Tennyson, assumed the name of D'Eyncourt, to mark his descent from that ancient Saxon house. He was a 'Varsity man, as the slangy people of to-day call those educated at Oxford or Cambridge; he was not political nor enthusiastic; he was excessively much of the drawing room, and smelt of the *Keepsake* and *Friendship's Offering* so much that the very names of his heroines seem to come out of gilt leaves, red silk or morocco covers, and their portraits to have been drawn by Boxall or Chalon, and engraved by Heath. Adeline, sweetly smiling Eleonore, Lilian, "airy fairy, Lilian," St. Agnes, Clara, Fatima, Maud, as Taine has it, "toutes les chores sout fines et exguises." Even a lady cannot frown without pleasing so well-bred a poet;

> Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow,
> Light glooming over eyes divine,
> Like little clouds sun-fringed.

This is pretty, pretty, very pretty. The *Quarterly*, which had done its best to slay Keats, strode up to Tennyson as did the mad Ajax after slaying the sheep, and laughing,

strode away, saying indignant things of this puling poet. What an effeminate thing, in effect says the *Quarterly*, to write thus:

> Oh! *darling room*, my heart's delight;
> Dear room, the apple of my sight;
> With my *two couches*, soft and white,
> There is no room so *exquisite;*
> No little room so soft and bright
> Wherein to read, *wherein to write.*

Possibly not, but if one wants to get manly poetry, we would rather have it from the worn deal desk of Scott. and from the plough-tail with Burns, and from the rough mountain stone whence Wordsworth communed with nature.

It has cost long years for Tennyson to free himself from the drawing room style of poetry. Indeed the *Keepsake* and *Book of Beauty* haunt him for ever, and have effectually forbidden him to be a *great* poet. And yet he had something of a chance that way once. There is the divine *afflatus* perceptible, but he has been educated too much, and is too careful and too timid. They write of him as of one who lies on the sofa all day, and smokes cigars: he has a softness and an effeminacy which is altogether false; even Bulwer has twitted him about being "a school-miss Alfred" when he was a great bearded rough fellow of forty;

> Even in a love song man should write for men,

said Bulwer, in reference to the Laureate. But from off that mental sofa Alfred Tennyson never has risen. He is a gentleman, that is but *one* kind of man; a true poet should be all kinds. His very passion is theatrical, and the great heart of the man who weeps or cries out does not beat sufficiently to rumple the starched shirt which covers his manly chest:

> O my cousin, shallow hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
> O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!
> Falser than all fancy, fathoms falser than all songs have sung;
> A puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

You see that while he curses the false girl, this young gentleman remembers apt alliteration's artful aid. Look at the f's and the s's. Compare this with the mad rage of Hamlet, when he believes that Ophelia is playing false with him, and with the wild rhapsodies he indulges in at her death.

Tennyson's popularity grew down from the higher classes. A few young people of high life began to admire him, and Moxon sold his books slowly; then the next under these took the fever, and found in the Laureate's poems easy things to understand; and then again, and again, a wider but a commoner circle took up his songs. He thereby made at last much money. His brothers Charles and Septimus, both singers, were at one time rivals, but he soon distanced them all. It was whispered that the Queen admired and that Prince Albert read his poems, and then with the English his fame was made. Moxon died, and the house paid Tennyson all that his books brought, save a per centage of fifteen per cent., so that for some years the poet found his lines golden. When *Macmillan* and the *Cornhill* started, they wanted names to attract, and they paid the Laureate a guinea a line for some weak kickshaws, "I stood upon a tower, &c.," and a puling thing about a City clerk, which were not worth printing. The magazines did themselves good as regards advertizing, but much harm to the Laureate. It is not well to drag a great name about on an advertizing van, but yet step by step he grew in popularity, and critics wrote of his great wisdom, and reviews praised the Cambridge prizeman, and spoke with bated breath of his high genius.

It will be as well to look to some few dates to see how his fame has culminated. He was born in 1810; educated at Cambridge at the same time at which Thackeray was there; Thackeray never graduated, Tennyson wrote a prize poem. In 1830 the Laureate published poems, chiefly lyrical, with prose notes full of egotism, which were properly laughed at, and since then, it is said, Tennyson has abandoned prose for ever. In 1832 these little poems again appeared, with most of the silly ones cut out, and the others very greatly improved. In 1842, after ten years of polish, appeared a larger and fuller edition, and the very reviews which had laughed at him began to praise him. In 1847 he published the *Princess*, which was somehow thought to be connected with royalty, but was only a pleasant medley, not too strong, and full of feminine sweetnesses. The public was delighted with it; the Book of Beauty flavour pervaded it like vanille: how touchingly superior must a man, a college-man, have felt as he read:

> Pretty were the sight
> If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
> With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
> And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
> I think they should not wear our rusty gowns.

In 1850 Tennyson made a great step in advance as a poet, but not as a thinker, by writing—or rather by publishing, for he keeps his works by him a long time—*In Memoriam*. The friend, celebrated and regretted so much in that poem, is Arthur H. Hallam, son of the historian. In 1851 occurred the great exhibition, and the Laureate, who had done no Laureate's work, might have greeted it as he did that of '62, but it was left to a volunteer Laureate, Mr. Thackeray, who, in the columns of the *Times*, wrote a May-day ode with more true "grit" in it than anything Tennyson has done. In 1852 died the Duke of Wellington, and Tennyson reported his funeral in noble verse, perhaps the noblest he has ever written. In 1855 he published *Maud*, which he believes to be, as he has told the writer, the finest thing he has ever written, and which certainly has in it more passion than any other of his pieces. In 1858 came his contribution to a great epic on the theme of King Arthur, *Flos Regum Arturus*, and in 1864 *Enoch Arden* and other poems.

For nearly forty years then Alfred Tennyson has been before the public; for twenty years he has been the Laureate, taking the laurel

> greener from the brows
> Of him who uttered nothing base;

for nearly ten years his bust has stood in the vestibule of his college, Trinity, as the somewhat genius of the place; and for all that time at least he has been accepted as the greatest living poet. Lately two concordances to his works have been published, an honour only yet accorded to the Bible, Shakespere, and Milton, and only last year an enterprising publisher gave the poet £4,500 a year as the calculated profit of publishing his works! Poetry pays then even now; the Queen salutes the Laureate with respect; it has been said and has been denied that he has been offered and refused a baronetcy. Can grateful England be more profuse to her singer and her son?

Yes, Tennyson is a greatly successful, but he is not a great poet. The next age will surely reverse the verdict of this. He is sugar sweet, pretty-pretty, full of womanly talk and feminine stuff. Lilian, Dora, Clara, Emmeline—you can count up thirty such pretty names, but you can not count any great poem of the Laureate's. Shelley has his Ode to the Skylark, Keats his to the Grecian Urn, Coleridge his Geneviéve, his weird Ancient Mariner, Wordsworth that sobbing, touching sublimity on the Intimations of Immortality—where is there one thing of Tennyson which can touch that? He has kept himself aloof from men; he has polished his poems till all are ripe and rotten; he has no fire and no fault; he has never lifted one to Heaven nor

plunged us to the lower depths. He has no creed, no faith, no depth. When another poet would bare his heart he talks of his pulses:

My *pulses* therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that makes us men.

What a grand line is that last, and what a feeble beast crawls on its belly before it! Can we forgive a poet, "suiting to forget" Heaven, Hell, Christ and his Death upon the Cross, His agony and bloody sweat, and lisping out *that*.

No, he is no great poet. Mr. Tennyson has been very discreet, and a very good court poet; for a manufactured article really none better; but he is like the lady who did not want to "look frightful when dead," and so put on the paint, and he will take no deep hold of the world. What did sweet Will Shakespere do? Did he not say that he had

gored mine own thoughts;
Sold cheap what is most dear,
And made myself a motley to the view.

Did he not give us blood and passion with his poetry? But what says Tennyson:—"Nor can it suit me to forget" that I dine with the Queen and am a Laureate. Further he adds

I count it crime
To mourn for any over much.

And posterity will count it folly to place a half-hearted and polished rhymster amongst her shining great ones who were fellows with poverty and disrespect in this life, and who learnt in suffering that they might teach in song.

WILKISSON OF "THE FORCE."

HE may be seen by the naked eye, like a new planet, almost any day, or rather any night, and like a planet he has his proper beat, and could not conveniently leave it, even for the sake of a glass of beer, without deranging the sidereal system generally. That at all events is the theory. Wilkisson has been known to leave his beat for the aforesaid reason, but the earth still rotates on its own axis as usual. The theory, therefore, is something like the printed regulations of a railway company, which are always produced for the enlightenment of a coroner's jury, but which are never acted upon in real life. The said regulations are produced to show that people cannot possibly be killed on that particular line of railway, and that, therefore, the mashed-up passengers have all and severally feloniously committed suicide. Wilkisson in his uniform is a noble spectacle to behold, both to angels and to cooks. With him the two are convertible terms; the cook is an angel, and the angel—to be worth Wilkisson's notice except officially—must belong to the cooking interest. Without his bracelet Wilkisson unbends and is one of ourselves. But the moment his bracelet is donned he becomes a terror to evil-doers, but a mild gazelle or antelope to those who do well. To those who do well he is even skittish in his gambols, and has been known to take new milk out of a saucer like a kitten. If anything could show the link which unites the police to the civilian it would be an incident like that—of which we shall only remark that it is pregnant.

Wilkisson was once stationed at the door of the Mechanics' Institute during the delivery of a scientific lecture, at which he heard that the human system was like a boiler that required a constant supply of fuel in order to throw off caloric. "In short," said the lecturer, bringing himself to a level with his audience, "we require firing up constantly; hence our beef, our bread, our beer are shot into our mouths for the express purpose of firing up the human system." Wilkisson treasured up this remark underneath his official belt, or wherever else the mind of a policeman is situate, and his main object ever since has been to shoot fuel into his boiler. With great good feeling, therefore, and in order not to miss a chance, he generally goes about with his mouth open, so that anyone in the possession of bread fuel, or beef fuel, or beer fuel may have a shot at Wilkisson, if so inclined. Ill-conditioned and ill-informed civilians have looked upon the policeman walking about with his mouth open as a fool, but they never made a more egregious blunder. Wilkisson knows what he is about, and he is usually about a restaurant. For the foregoing reason, the full front view, or even the profile, of Wilkisson may not be effective, but anyone walking behind him must be struck with his amazing power. When, having straightened himself up to encounter a mendicant, and shouldered his arms, so to speak (by which, of course, we mean his own arms), he takes the floor or the trottoir, there is something in the small of his back inexpressibly potential. His tailoring is not, perhaps, what it might be—for, of course, he has not come out of the hands of Verity—he was made for his clothes, and is commanded by the same, he is therefore at a disadvantage, and his legs look baggy; but there is, nevertheless, a spinal grandeur in the appearance of his back which is replete with awe. It epitomises the ease with which Britons submit to civic government, for we must remember that the British policeman, like the French private soldier, carries a field-marshal's baton in his pocket, and must be respected accordingly. Wilkisson was bred up in the agricultural districts, and can read and write. He has been baptized, and has had the measles, infantine rashes, and the frog. He is of good character; has never had his collar bone put out; and would be proud to view the civilian who would attempt to do it. With such qualifications he entered the force, and although, during his official career, he has upon one occasion been lightly operated upon by an Irishman with a kitchen poker, which has injured the bridge of his nose architecturally, he may yet be considered to this day a model policeman.

On the last Cesarewitch day, Wilkisson was airing his splendid figure in Blue Street. His bracelet was on, and he was not to be trifled with. His mouth was open. His heart was "like adamant, stern and unbending." There was a crowd in Blue Street, "which it was a nuisance." Wilkisson's eye was upon them—we say his eye, but this does not mean that the other had been bobbed out; it only means that one eye was enough for "such low betting fellows as them." Wilkisson stepped into the midst of the crowd to assert the majesty of the law. At that particular instant a warehouseman, emerging from a visit to the Post Office, and having no more concern or interest in the crowd of wagerers than the Rev. Mr. Bardsley of St. Ann's, was quietly endeavouring to clear the crush of Cesarewitchers. "Now then, move on," said Wilkisson. "Well, I am moving on," said the warehouseman. The time for action had come; Wilkisson collared him with the official grip, which may be called easy practice in strangulation. "Yes, you are moving on," said Wilkisson; "I'll move you on, I'll—move—you—on;" and, giving the warehouseman a final throater, which made him shut his eyes and open his mouth like a three days' throstle, he hauled the affrighted warehouseman down to the police office, where he was locked up in a neat and convenient cell. The protestations of the man as he was walked off to the lock-ups were all in vain. Wilkisson's blood was up. The eyes of the public were upon him; petitions were in vain. The hitherto well-conditioned man of good character was followed by a hustling crowd, some of whom knew him, and many of whom considered that he had embarked in the precarious line of pocket-picking or petty larceny. After the man had been locked up some time he was released on bail for his appearance at the borough court next morning. The man's employers heard his tale, and believed him when he said that he was not obstructing the footpath, that he was not a betting man, and had no concern or interest in such; and the employer with whom he had chiefly been brought in contact went down next morning to the court to speak for him. The case was so disgraceful an one on the part of the police that no advocate had been engaged. The man's character, as vouched for by those who had known him for many years, was considered, under the circumstances, to be a fair answer to the charge. But, unluckily for the accused, the stipendiary was not on the bench. The presiding magistrate was an amateur justice, a very diligent one, who apparently considers that by merely sitting regularly wisdom will follow. This gentleman had seen experts in the craft of magistracy toss off cases rapidly, and considered himself qualified to do the like. His rule of conduct is, "Always believe the police. The fact of your being accused by Wilkisson is sufficient. Wilkisson tries the men beforehand, and I pronounce sentence." On this occasion Wilkisson kissed the book, greasy with the caresses of his veracious fellows in the force, stated his case, which was rapidly mopped

up into the magistrate's brain, but when the man who stood accused wanted to state his—the amateur justice having heard his betters do the like—hollowed out "You are fined *2s. 6d.* Call the next case."

We mention no names, but these are circumstances which occurred in Manchester a fortnight ago, and we call them disgraceful. The poor turgid ignoramus of a policeman may be excused, "for tis his nature to;" but what shall we say of the magistrate? We believe him to be as good a man as ever lived. He would not willingly do injustice, but he has done it in this case most unquestionably. Rapid ball firing of sentences upon prisoners may look very well, may give the sentencer the semblance of almost professional and stipendiary acuteness, but if it be exercised frequently as it was in the case we recite, there will be a rumpus amongst the beaks. We must in that case insist that the amateurs shall confine themselves to their week's share of magisterial work, and not practice upon the public as this poor warehouseman was practised upon. If a gentleman with a good coat upon his back had been so accused, he would have been heard, at least, in his own defence. The magistrate in question is fond of talking about the blessedness of English institutions, which throw up to the surface such splendid ministers of justice as Wilkisson and himself!

BOWDON AND ALTRINCHAM.

THE geography of the Bowdon and Altrincham district is a puzzle; the confusion of its topography is apparently inextricable. Without a special course of "cram," the intelligence of an ordinary resident would be quite inadequate to the solution of the problem, which is which or where is where of the two places. Altrincham, Bowdon, Hale, and Dunham Massey are all mixed up in a wonderful way. It might appear pretty safe to conjecture that when at Bowdon station you are in Bowdon. But this seemingly natural surmise turns out to be inaccurate. Bowdon station is in Altrincham. Then, after climbing the ascent leading from the station towards the church, locally known as Bowdon Downs, where one might begin to feel oneself moderately safe, it is absolutely confusing, not to say exasperating, to meet with an announcement declaring the locality to be Dunham Massey. Formidable as these difficulties may be to the parochial authorities or the officers of the Ordnance Survey, they need not trouble us in our modest attempt to note the more general aspect of the place. Bowdon proper may be said to cover the slope and summit of a gently rising ground, and is bounded or intersected by two roads which confront us as we leave the station. One, already referred to as the Downs, trends to the right; the other, to the left, is called Ashley Road. The latter leads along the bottom of the hill, and passes by a curve below the churchyard. Running at a slight elevation above the adjacent country, it affords a splendid view towards Alderley Edge and the Vale Royal of Cheshire. The road yclept the Downs rises gradually from the station. First we pass, on the right, the Independent Chapel, or, as it is frequently called, the Congregational Church, an ugly structure architecturally, but less objectionable in its internal arrangements than its external appearance would have led one to expect. Further on, the road turns to the right and left; the right branch terminates at St. Margaret's Church; the left leads by the Firs to the Parish, or, as it was sometimes called before its renovation, the Old Church. Close adjoining the church is the inevitable concomitant, the public-house; in this case there are two such places of entertainment. The churchyard commands an extensive view of Bowdon Vale and Mid Cheshire, with the church tower and woods of Rostherne in the distance. It should in itself be a place of abiding loveliness, yet it always leaves an impression of neglect. The church, before its alteration, was the most prominent feature remaining of old Bowdon. It need scarcely be told that the Bowdon of to-day is altogether modern in its origin. It has developed almost entirely with the railway. To the left of the church is Rose Hill, of which the chief features are boys' schools, and a chapel approached by one of the most impassable roads we ever had the misfortune to stumble over. To the right, sundry lanes conduct us to Dunham Park, the bright rich lines of whose foliage, as it fringes the landscape to the north, lends to Bowdon a perennial charm.

The houses in Bowdon are, for the most part, large, and detached. The latter circumstance may have some influence in determining the formation of a distinguished trait amongst the social features of the place, an unapproachableness and a reserve altogether different from what is found in most suburban districts. People know and apparently care very little about each other. Next door neighbours are as ignorant and careless of each other's proceedings as if they lived in a large town. Everything and everybody are quiet, respectable, and possibly somewhat dull. Even gossip, the groundwork of all social phenomena in neighbouring localities, flourishes not at Bowdon. This fact is all the more wonderful when it is known that young ladies—not boarding school girls merely, though they exist in large numbers, but spinsters, to use the legal word—are, it is said, out of proportion numerous. They are apparently too little acquainted with each other to hate, or, what is much the same thing, to love violently. Journies to the Altrincham shops, and an occasional visit to Manchester on a marketing expedition on a Saturday morning, are the prominent excitements. The life of the majority of the male residents is divided between Manchester and Bowdon. The travel by railway occupies a considerable share of their time and attention. The Bowdon Cricket Club is a distinguished local institution. It is said to be marked by some of that reserve which hangs over the place. For the greater part of its existence, it appears, too, to have laboured under the disadvantage of impecuniosity; at least, till very lately, the club seems to have been burdened by debt. After the close of the legitimate cricketing season the members have, for one or two years back, at uncertain intervals, rushed into the wild excess of Hare and Hounds. On the occasion of a "run," scattered parties of hounds may be met panting through country lanes anywhere within two miles of the goal. All manner of costumes are in vogue. Some runners are bareheaded, and got up in the orthodox fashion, whilst others, in their mad excitement, have come straight from the station, and run under the disadvantages of umbrellas and tall hats Many stirring tales are told, of running swift and strong, of men braving the murky waters of the Bollin in the course of these chases. Some few of the rising generation are rather too much given to betting, to petting bulldogs and prize "ratters." They are very fond of ratting; information can always be gleaned from them as to where badgers may be found; and when any such excitement as a dog fight in the lowest parts of Manchester is afloat, they are always provided with valuable information on the subject. Finally, Bowdon boasts a band of volunteers, mostly recruited we fancy from Altrincham, of great local repute as marksmen, and commanded by a gentleman at least as distinguished for after-dinner speech-making.

Altrincham, or Altringham, as it is sometimes written and spoken, is a widely different place, and, in its own opinion, certainly of no little importance. For, to begin with, it has a mayor; an official with functions and responsibilities of a vague character, but still a mayor. Altrincham is besides the centre of an extensive agricultural district, and a market town. The Market-place, with its old-fashioned looking hotel, which speaks of the old coaching days, is quiet and quaint enough on ordinary occasions. De Quincey, in his *Opium Eater*, speaks rapturously of its beauty, and of the "pretty girls of Altrincham." On market day, vendors of butter, eggs, and such commodities, bring their baskets, and give the place almost an air of excitement, whilst a market for pigs in the vicinity by no means adds to the stillness of the place. Besides all this, Altrincham is the business, or at least the shopping, side of Bowdon. In Bowdon proper there are no shops, the nearest of any importance being those opposite the Bowdon station. Here, then, the ladies of Bowdon have to come to make their everyday purchases. The shopkeepers have, in many instances, not lost that primitive though rather tantalizing air of independent carelessness, which conveys to the purchaser the unmistakable conviction that the patronage is at least reciprocal. Bowdon and Altrincham stations are connected by George Street. This is a street of rather mixed, and in places doubtful, character. One of its features is Beggars' Square, the centre of the Irish locality, for Altrincham being, as we said, an agricultural centre, naturally attracts an Irish element. This street is very popular on Saturday nights. It contains most of the beer-houses and public-houses of the place; a fact that prepares us for the information that here any drunken people are to be found, if discoverable at all, in the neighbourhood. The spot, too, seems to have an extraordinary power of developing the pugnacity of inebriates, so that "Drunk and Disorderly in George Street" is one of the paragraph headings which must be kept in type by our encyclopædic contemporary, the *Altrincham and Bowdon Guardian*.

Not only are Altrincham and Bowdon contrasted by the fact that, in the former, there is some attempt at business and commercial life, whilst in the latter there is none. The social aspect of the two places is different. In Bowdon proper poverty scarce puts in an appearance. There are no poor people, and very few who would be included under the class of working men—using the phrase in its proper signification. In Altrincham, such people are numerous; indeed, form the greater part of the inhabitants. The district lying to the left of Bowdon station, called New Town or (perhaps in slang) California, is entirely occupied by this class. One wonderful feature about this district of New Town is the enormous number of children. They swarm. Those who have the misfortune to go to the station from the Hale side of Bowdon, and who have to hurry, do so at the imminent peril either of upsetting half a dozen youngsters or of becoming hopelessly entangled in their midst.

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INSIDE an EMPORIUM of FASHION.

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT.]

If an "amateur casual," of Greenwood type, could successfully go the round of our "emporiums of fashion," no doubt we should learn a sorry lesson of the inner life of some of these palatial establishments. There are, however, notable exceptions, it is only fair to admit, and to such, consequently, these observations do not extend. We were tempted to peep inside one of modern and fashionable exterior, where stand, from morning to night, some score or more of daintily-attired young women, ranged along the semi-circuitous counters like so many statues. A cross, ill-to-please customer steps within the portals of the prison-disciplined edifice, when an obsequious hard-featured gentleman (?) advances from the centre of the floor, and blandly ushers forward the new comer, with the sharply spoken, meant-to-sound-civil exordium, "Miss Tremble, attend to this 'person.'" Mr. Tantrim Shopwalker, by the bye, is an important personage—and more, he knows it— usually too polite to be civil. He is, indeed, the veritable factotum of this hemisphere of fashion. Miss Tremble instantly assumes an anxious air, and is exceedingly voluble in her commendations. But fate is against her; the resources of the establishment are exhausted in the search for some out-of-the-way requirement of the exacting visitor, who eventually retires withot effecting a purchase. Poor Miss's troubles do not end here, for according to the "rules" of establishment (and they are as unalterable as the antiquated laws of Medes and Persians), she has incurred a penalty of a shilling, or may be half-a-crown, for failing to effect a sale! Mr. Tantrim notes the fact. Excuses are absurd. The unfortunate delinquent says but little, because she knows that, in such cases, discretion is the better part of valour. If she has temerity enough to "talk back," she is accounted a belligerent. But Mr. Tantrim has his remedy, for the second "offence" is punishable with much greater severity than the first. She receives no immediate consolation from her colleagues, for "talking" is as strictly prohibited under a minor infliction. A favouring "smile" even falls within the range of the merciless statute of limitations. To laugh outright is intolerable, and "twopence a laugh" is the lowest impost, with a like restriction for temporarily leaving the department without "signing the book!" The precious lost minutes of the morning are "tolled" with the utmost exactness by the watchful timekeeper, but, for the avaricious set-off at the suspension of business, compensation is out of the question.

As soon as the "season" sets in, the workshop is inundated with "improvers" and apprentices; it is, in fact, suddenly converted into a species of millinery academy. What become of the "efficients," it is difficult to tell, for they are a migratory class. After the flush has subsided, they disappear, to earn a precarious livelihood as best they may—*how* precarious, many a sorely-tried yet virtuous, hardworking, and honest girl can testify. The Factory Act is winked at, whilst young ladies can, with impunity, be smuggled from the workshop into the retail department, and detained there in contravention of terms of the act. Only the vigilance of active and intelligent inspectors can stop the abuses which undoubtedly exist, and thus emancipate our oppressed sisterhood from the thraldom of social tyranny.

[We give the foregoing on the faith of a correspondent who has forwarded his name. We cannot, of our own knowledge, vouch for the accuracy of his statements as regards the system of fines.—Editor *Sphinx*.]

NEW YORK EDITORS.—Mr. Bennett is the tallest editor, Mr. Dana the fattest, Mr. Greeley the slouchiest, Mr. Erastus Brooks the solemnest, Mr. Tilton the shank-marest, Mr. De Nyse the shortest, Mr. Van Buren the reddest, Mr. Rosevelt the politest, Mr. Oakey Hall the wittiest, Mr. Winter the touchiest, Mrs. Stanton the prettiest, Miss Anthony the prettiest, Mrs. Shepherd the prettiest, Eleonora Kirk the prettiest, and Nellie Hutchinson also the prettiest.—*New York Star*.

SPECULATION IN THE COTTON TRADE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—Your correspondent "Banquo," in his answer to my letter, has changed the subject under discussion from "speculation" to "gambling," and treated the two as identical. This they obviously are not, and whilst I uphold the one and maintain it to be the essence of business, I am as little an advocate of the other as any of your readers. I hold gambling in business to be operating beyond one's means, so that in case of an unfavorable result, the consequent loss would fall on others, and that all transactions that do not come under this description are perfectly legitimate. As to whether or no some speculations are advisable, is altogether another question. I readily concede that extreme speculation, as is the case with every thing else carried to excess, has its attendant evils, but to condemn it because it is abused, is just as reasonable as to try to live without drinking, because some people like too much beer or spirits and therefore get drunk. It is necessary to drink in order to live; it is equally necessary to speculate in order to do business. A boy buys a dozen newspapers in the hope of selling them in the street to advantage. A tradesman invests £500 to stock a shop in a new locality where he supposes there will be a good business. A merchant sends out to India or China ten thousand pounds worth of goods, either on clients' or his own account. Where is the difference in principle in the three cases? For probably the loss of the sixpence is of more importance to the newspaper boy than the loss of the £10,000 to the merchant. Are not all three transactions equally speculations? One of the tests your correspondent applies to a transaction to decide its morality or immorality appears to be the rendering some useful service by the operator to warrant his drawing some gain from it, and "Banquo" is surprised at my asking for some proof of his proposition that any other gain must be an immoral one; but to test his proposition let us suppose A invests £1,000 in Consols at 93, and sells out shortly after at 96, thereby gaining £30. Is that £30 to be classed as unholy gains? Yet what useful service has A rendered except to himself? "Banquo" may answer, this is an extreme case; yet the strength of the chain, and so of his argument. "Banquo" then explains who he

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considers to be "necessary" men between the grower and manufacturer of cotton, permitting merchants, brokers, and agents, who are the medium of exchange and distribution, to draw a profit from it as it passes through their hands without committing an immorality; but who is to say such an one is necessary and another is not? Supposing, as a spinner, I maintain that the broker, at Liverpool, is to me unnecessary, standing between me and the producer; is his business therefore turned from a moral to an immoral one? Or let us go still further, and ask what is to prevent the spinner buying his cotton direct from the planter, by which mode of proceeding many of the present middle men would be unnecessary? Are they therefore to be stigmatized as parasites? It is obvious from such instances that the test of "useful service" to decide the morality or immorality of a transaction cannot apply, simply because the term is so vague that no two persons will agree in opinion as to what it is, or is not, and I hope I shall not be thought obtuse or stupid if I fail to see the, to "Banquo," self-evident proof of his proposition on the fine line which divides legitimate operations from those of the speculator. To me business and speculation are synonymous terms, and I would ask those who dispute it to point out any transaction of a business man from the time of his apprenticeship to his retirement that has not an element of uncertainty, and therefore of speculation, in it. As your correspondent did not go on to dispute the truth of my assertion that the want of cotton and not speculation caused the present bad trade, I will not further enter into the subject.—I remain, sir, yours obediently,

RETEXE BBARCLLIW.

October 18th, 1869.

THE TOUTING NUISANCE AT DOUGLAS.—On landing on the Isle of Man, the first thing which strikes a visitor is not so much the novelty of the scenery, or the peculiar aspect of the country, as the extent to which the touting system is carried. It meets you the moment the steamer anchors in the Bay, when boats of all descriptions—hotel boats, lodging-house boats, and private boats—swarm around the vessel, keeping the shipping company's yawls off as long as they dare, and picking up as many odd passengers as they can induce to pay for the privilege of being rowed on shore; it lies in wait for you at the landing-place, where a horde of porters, sufficient, one would think, to carry the steamer itself, if it could be got near enough, fight over your luggage, and are so persistent in their efforts that you are glad to come to terms with them; it breaks out in perfect luxuriance on the pier as you pass along a double line of men and women, every one of whom comes provided with a card, on which their name, address, and charge for lodgings is inscribed; and it culminates amongst the car-drivers, whose loudly-proffered services, by the way, will frequently be found very useful in getting out of the road. "Touting" is undoubtedly carried on in the Isle of Man in a manner almost as discreditable and annoying as that encountered in some of the Continental towns; and if the authorities have any regard for the good name of their island and the comfort of their visitors, they will sweep it away as they would any other nuisance. It is but right to say that, so far as my experience goes, "touting" exists on Douglas pier only, and nowhere else. As soon as you get beyond the car-drivers, the forlorn hope of the system, you are as free and unfettered as at an English watering-place, and probably will forget all about it unless you stroll towards the pier about the hour the steamers arrive—the great event of the day in Douglas—and find it flourishing as prominently as ever.

AN ECCENTRIC BUT NOT UNWISE TOURIST.—We once knew a somewhat eccentric fellow, eccentric, however, on this point alone, who piqued himself on starting for his summer tour simply "as he stood." With a hat and an umbrella he would have started for the Caucasus or Nova Zembla, if his whim took him there; he certainly did start with this somewhat meagre outfit for Moscow and the Calabrias. To use his own phrase, he "packed as he went along." A hand-bag was snatched at Dieppe, Paris yielded a razor and a toothbrush, the necessaries of civilized repose got hitched on at Strasburg, a comfortable wide-awake marked his stay at Dresden, his railway rug bore the stamp of Viennese extraction. He would fling down his burden when he reached home again, and declare he needed no Murray. Every article of his accumulated belongings had its separate history, its memories, and its associations. As he unpacked his carpet-bag he unpacked his diary. The carpet-bag itself was one of the most notable events of his tour. Its desirableness had loomed on him as he parted from the Italian lakes. Its necessity forced itself on him at Rome. "The idea struck me as I stood on the Capitol," he would say, "that I must have a carpet-bag. At Naples, with the great blue circle of the bay before me, I saw it, I had it." The very incongruity of the collection, as it strewed the floor, framed itself into a sort of mosaic of his travels. There was a German heaviness about his overcoat, a Swiss force about his stick, an Italian grace in the loose splendours of his neck-tie, a Parisian precision in his gloves. "I am," he would comment reflectively, "all I have seen and heard."—*Saturday Review.*

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

The publication is commenced in the *Sphinx* to day, of a series of sketches entitled

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As *Men of the Time* also included women, and as women rival men in Literature, *le beau sexe* will not be absent from these columns. The sketches are intended to do for England that which the excellent series of brochures *Les Contemporains* does for France. They will, without unduly or immodestly lifting the veil from private life, give a critical biography of the best known of our Living Authors.

Communications should be addressed to the Editor, *Sphinx* Office, 37, Oxford Street, Manchester. Every manuscript should bear the name and address of the sender. All contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage. No replies or MSS. can be delivered on personal application.

Business communications and advertisements should be addressed to Messrs. J. G. KERSHAW & Co., "Main" Printing Offices, 37, Oxford-st, Manchester

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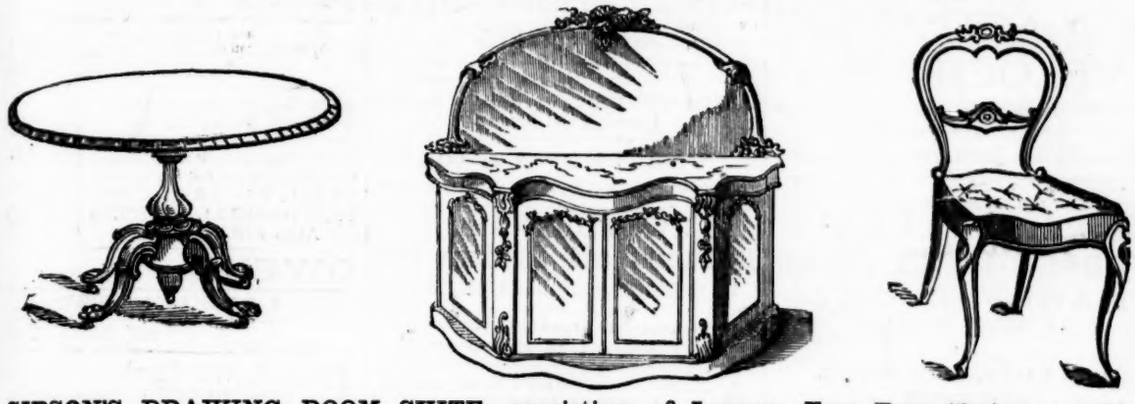

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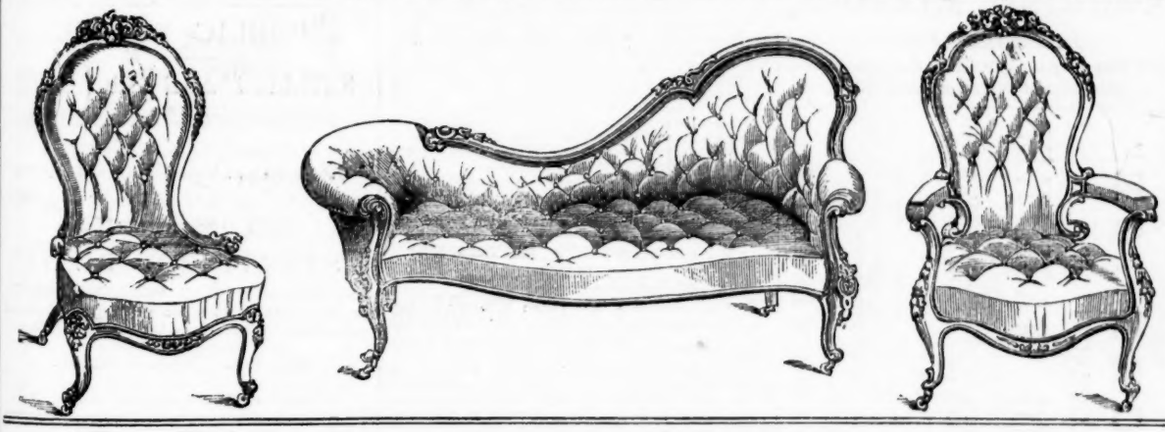

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